No. 4

BULLETIN

OF THE

UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

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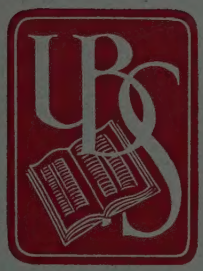

1950
FOURTH QUARTER

146, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, LONDON, E.C.4.

UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES

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FOURTH QUARTER - 1950

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Editorial

COLPORTAGE work has been for more than one hundred years a particular feature of the activity of the Bible Societies. When, in the sixteenth century, the Word of God was printed for the first time in the vernacular of most European countries, colporteurs roamed all over Europe, bringing the rediscovered Good News to populations still deeply sunk in ignorance of the message of the Bible. At that time, the churches to which these colporteurs belonged were aware of their responsibility for the production and circulation of the Word of God, and fulfilled that responsibility.

Later, this enthusiasm declined and at the beginning of the last century the Bible Societies assumed a responsibility which the churches seemed to have forgotten, and again, as three centuries previously, colportage work restarted, being the indispensable accompaniment to any faithful and earnest interest in the Bible.

Wars and the rising cost of living have made colportage as organised by the Bible Societies one hundred years ago more and more difficult and impossible. New methods have to be tried and carried out ; a new approach to the whole problem has become necessary.

The reader will find in this issue of the *Bulletin* several articles and news items which deal with this side of Bible distribution. The most interesting and important aspect to which nearly all these point, is that this work of colportage is carried out in much closer contact with the churches than was previously the case. In one way or another, all of these contributions indicate that the churches have grown more conscious of the importance of Bible colportage and are more effectively interested in it. I would not go so far as to say that the churches as such have yet become fully aware of their responsibilities in this realm, but we must recognise with gratitude that more and new bridges are constantly linking the churches and the Bible Societies in a common effort to circulate the Word of God more effectively and to make it the centre of the spiritual life of both individuals and churches.

Colportage work is an essentially evangelistic activity. More and more, the churches are becoming preoccupied with the problem of evangelism ; it is impossible that along this line Bible Societies and churches should not meet and help one another to become more faithful and more ardent witnesses of the message of the Bible. But the whole problem still remains unclarified ; and before any concrete steps can be taken, a serious study of the situation and of the various aspects of colportage work and its relation to evangelism still needs to be carefully made. That is why this problem of colportage was, for instance, one of the main themes proposed to the participants at the U.B.S. Regional Conference in Vienna, and all those who attended the gathering felt that further studies should be devoted to the subject in similar future meetings.

It was also with this same concern that the Standing Committee of the U.B.S. decided to approach the World Council of Churches and offer to second to that organisation a secretary, whose special responsibility would be to introduce into the studies now being carried out by the World Council of Churches on the subject of evangelism throughout the world, the particular problem of the effective promotion of the circulation and use of the Scriptures in evangelism. This offer has been accepted and the terms of reference for the secretary worked out. The Bible Societies wish to maintain their independence and liberty of action, but at the same time they feel that a special responsibility devolves upon them to help those in the churches who are particularly concerned with questions of evangelism to give the right place in their efforts to the distribution of the Book of Life.

This question of the place of the Bible in evangelism will certainly be raised again in future issues of the *Bulletin*, for it surely represents a most essential question facing the Bible Societies to-day ; involved in this question is one of the fundamental reasons for their existence.

A SHORT HISTORY OF BIBLE WORK IN AUSTRIA

KARL UHL

SOON after the British and Foreign Bible Society was founded, Austria came into its field of interest. As early as 16th April, 1804, Tobias Kiesling presented a report to the Society's officers which dealt with the shortage of Scriptures in various countries of Europe, among which he also mentioned Austria.

As Mr. Kiesling was a merchant, he had occasion to visit the Austrian markets again and again, and as far as was possible he always took Bibles with him. He also received a gift of £100 from the B.F.B.S. Committee, in order to found a Bible Society in Nürnberg, and this gave him greater opportunities for bringing Scriptures into Austria.

In 1816, Dr. Robert Pinkerton—one of the foremost agents of the B.F.B.S. at that time—tried to set up a national Bible Society in the Austro-Hungarian (Habsburg) monarchy. By that time he had already visited many other countries and had succeeded in arousing interest in the work of Bible distribution. In Vienna he had a friendly reception from Prince Metternich, who encouraged him to prepare a petition for presentation to the Emperor. This he did, but no answer was ever received, and soon afterwards an edict was issued prohibiting, throughout the Austrian dominions, both the establishment of Bible Societies and the circulation of Scriptures by foreign Bible Societies, either gratis or otherwise. The time had not yet come when the Word of God could be circulated freely and openly in Austria.

Twenty years later, however, a " backdoor " opened, making it possible to supply Austrian Protestants with Scriptures once again. In 1837, the Rev. G. A. Wimmer, a Hungarian pastor, offered his services to the Society for the distribution of Scriptures among his fellow-countrymen. This work was expanded little by little and in 1848, when a stop was suddenly put to it because of the political convulsions taking place at the time, about 340,000 copies of Scripture had been circulated, many of them being smuggled into Austria.

In September, 1850, the General Committee of the B.F.B.S. sent Mr. Edward Millard to Vienna to organise distribution of the Scriptures, according to the rules and methods of the Bible Society. Mr. Millard, although still young, had previously worked under the direction of Dr. Pinkerton and had soon shown exceptional gifts, especially in the organisation of colportage work. He recognised that if the Bible were to be circulated in considerable quantities in a large territory like the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, with its many and various peoples, this could only be done successfully by establishing a Bible depot in the capital and by extensive colportage. But at first he encountered many difficulties : the authorities of the town, and indeed of the whole country, had no real understanding of the task of circulating the Word of God and they put many obstacles in the way of the work. Nevertheless, after six months Mr. Millard was able to report that although the hunger and thirst for Scriptures were still acute throughout the country, he had already circulated 6,965 copies and could but hope that the Austrian government would not prevent Protestant people securing all the Bibles they needed. After eighteen months 36,328 copies of Holy Scripture were circulated and 25,000 copies were being printed. Bible colportage was, however, still impossible.

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Then the work was again suddenly forbidden. The Society's entire stock in Vienna was confiscated and orders were given for it to be destroyed ; in addition, the Bible depots in Budapest and Guins were closed and sealed. The London Committee tried in vain, through the good offices of the British Foreign Office in London and the Ambassador in Vienna, to secure a remission of this interdiction. The only success with which these appeals met was a repeal of the order to destroy the stocks in Vienna, Mr. Millard being authorised to take them out of the country. There were 204 large parcels and 125 cases, containing in all 58,087 copies of Scripture. These were loaded in a column of twelve lorries which left Vienna for Breslau, guarded by the police.

In 1861, however, Emperor Francis Joseph I granted all Protestants equality before the law and complete religious freedom, and this opened the way for the renewal of Bible circulation in Austria. Negotiations took place which were strongly supported by the Evangelical High Consistory in Vienna, and the result was that on 14th November, 1864, a new Bible depot was opened there. But the liberty granted to Bible distribution in most countries of the world was still withheld in Austria : the B.F.B.S. were not allowed to have their own license for Bible work, and furthermore were obliged to comply with the hard conditions of Austrian law in connection with the Bible colportage they had already started. Colporteurs were allowed only to secure "subscribers" for their Scriptures, and were not permitted to sell directly to the people.

Permission was also given for the opening of Bible depots in Prague, Budapest, Belgrade, Trieste, Warsaw, Karlsbad, Klausenburg and other towns, and these provided bases for Bible colportage work. In this way distribution of the Scriptures in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy was at last permitted to develop slowly.

At the beginning of 1887, Mr. Millard retired, after forty years of devoted activity on behalf of the Bible Society. During these years he had been responsible for the circulation of over 4,750,000 Scriptures, and on his retirement he was able to say : " The Bible has filled my heart with joy, has made my work both happy and profitable, my home cheerful, my family united, my present days pleasant and my future blessed."

His son, who had already been his assistant for nineteen years, was asked by the General Committee in London to take over the direction of the agency. He agreed and was active in this way for a further fifteen years.

Conditions had certainly improved by this time, although the work was still meeting with greater difficulties than in many other European countries or than in the rest of the world. In Austria, distribution of the Bible was still considered a rather offensive activity, and although it had been quite clear for decades that the work did no harm either to the State, or to the Church or Christian organisations, the workers had always to bear in mind that their activities could suddenly be stopped on the basis of any slanderous reports. The B.F.B.S. had many friends among the ordinary people but they were still far from having the status which their work deserved. The Evangelical Consistory was the only body whose help and friendship were repeatedly mentioned in the reports. When difficulties arose the Messrs. Millard (father and son) were always able to turn to it, without any fear of being disappointed.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Bible Society work was reorganised and a Central European Agency was created, embracing the two large monarchies of Germany and Austro-Hungary, as well as some other smaller countries. Its direction was taken over by Mr. A. Morrison who had his office

in Berlin, and the work in Austria was put under the supervision of Theodore Hofer. During that period the Society's activity met with official recognition when, for the first time, the B.F.B.S. was granted, by the regional authorities of Lower Austria, a license to open a book stall. This was in October, 1906. Authorisation was also given for colportage work, but only after long delays.

The first World War brought with it drastic changes. The colporteurs had to be dismissed, and large editions of Scriptures which had been ordered from printing houses in Vienna imposed a heavy financial burden on the Agency which by that time had been cut off from the Bible House in London. Somehow, however, sufficient funds were collected and Mr. Hofer was able to keep the Vienna depot open throughout the war, and also to cover, to a certain extent, the demands for Scriptures in Austria during that time.

The dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy seemed to point to the end of the B.F.B.S. work in Austria. The new political, social and financial conditions necessitated the provisional closing of the Vienna agency in 1920. Vienna was no longer the capital of a large empire, but only of a small country with very limited possibilities for Bible circulation. The maintenance of a large staff was no longer justifiable, and it was impossible to keep large warehouses and colporteurs in the unsettled circumstances of the day.

Four years later, however, Mr. Hans Döring went to Vienna on behalf of the Bible Society in order to study whether Bible distribution and colportage could be resumed. His report was so encouraging that the Committee in London decided to re-open a Bible depot under Mr. Döring's direction. Since for a while it was impossible for the Society to have its own depot, the Y.M.C.A. book stall became provisionally the Society's official depository. By that time, the Methodist church was also taking a special interest in, and responsibility for colportage work.

It did not take long for Mr. Döring to find a new team of young and vigorous colporteurs and to put them to work. It also became possible to obtain, without any difficulty, authorisation for the colporteurs' activity, and even the former strong opposition of the authorities and the Roman Catholic priests considerably lessened. Unfortunately, even then (and this is true even up to the present day) colporteurs were not allowed to sell Scriptures direct, but (as 100 years before) they were permitted only to accept orders which had to be fulfilled later. However, the work of Bible distribution was fully developed by the time Hans Döring passed away in 1936.

The second World War and its consequences created new difficulties which, at the time, seemed insuperable. The colporteurs were either mobilised or directed into other work ; relations with the Bible House in London were cut, so that the condition of the work in Austria was once again critical, especially with regard to finance. Important changes had to be made : the Berlin depot was merged with the one in Vienna, as it appeared necessary for the main agency to be situated in the South, in the newly-created State. It soon became clear, however, that the financial problems were nothing in comparison to the crisis which then broke out. In January, 1941, work at the Vienna depot was completely obstructed. It was only by a miracle of the Lord that the stocks were not confiscated. In the same miraculous way the depot was kept open during the entire war. Neither the enemies of the Word of God, nor the developments of the war were able to destroy the stocks in Vienna, and the stocks in Berlin were brought to Vienna for safety long before the end of this dreadful second World War. Thus, in 1945, when the work was resumed, several thousand copies of Holy Scripture were available at once.

The last period in the history of the Agency, which brings us right up to the present day, has been filled with much encouraging progress. Bible colportage has been started again and many more visitors are coming to the Vienna depot. It is noteworthy that the authorities which, in previous decades, made our work almost impossible, now show remarkable friendliness. Relations with members of the Roman Catholic Church are also constantly improving. The established and free churches have formed an Austrian Bible Committee and give strong support to the work of the Society, especially in the realm of colportage. A wide circle of friends of the work has spread all over the country and they support, by prayer and action, the blessed work of Bible distribution. Printing of Bible editions in Austria has been re-started and it is the earnest endeavour of the B.F.B.S. to fulfil the hopes of all our friends, as well as to accomplish the task of bringing the Word of God to our countrymen, until the time comes when the commission with which Dr. Pinkerton came to Vienna in 1816 can be really carried through, and Austria receives her Bibles from the " Austrian Bible Society."

NOTE :—In a report given at the U.B.S. regional conference, Mr. Uhl gave the following complementary information on the activity in Austria since the end of the war :

Since the end of the war we can report the following : 40,000 Bibles have been printed, a further 10,000 will be ready within a few days and some further thousands will be ready in six to eight weeks. Since the end of the war we have printed 20,000 Gospels and these have in part already been distributed. A further 20,000 Gospels will be ready in a few days. The distribution of the Bible in Austria is increasing and our annual circulation is now nearly 50,000 and would have been higher if we had had more raw materials in the past years.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF BIBLE WORK IN AUSTRIA

W. J. Bradnock and W. J. Platt

AGAINST a background of anxiety and strain, which is characteristic of life in Vienna to-day, it was significant that the recent Centenary celebration meetings of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Austria were crowded to capacity by audiences representing all the evangelical Churches, for whom the Word of God clearly has a central place, and to whom especially in these days it has assumed new relevance.

Exactly one hundred years ago the Bible Society began what was then its unpopular work in a land where, among millions of Roman Catholics, there was only a minority of Lutherans. Both Churches suspected the colporteur and the free-lance circulation of the Gospel story. Yet two weeks ago 1,800 people paid tribute to the Society's work in a great Centenary meeting in a large Vienna concert-hall, where (in the presence of the Lord Mayor of Vienna, the Vice-Premier of Austria and several representatives of the non-Roman Catholic Church authorities) Bible Society delegations from London, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Australia and Norway were gathered. Prejudice, if it has not altogether disappeared, has decreased, and the respect with which the Bible Society, under its secretary Mr. Karl Uhl, is everywhere received, is remarkable.

On the first morning of the Centenary celebrations, workers gathered in the Depot, rebuilt since the war on a spot where Mozart lived, now in the Russian Zone. In the afternoon the delegates were received firstly by Cardinal

Innitzer, Primate of the Roman Catholic Church in Austria, then by the Austrian Bible Committee, and later on the same day by Bishop May, head of the Lutheran Church which, with the Reformed Church, to-day numbers some 350,000. On the Sunday, at a great service held in the largest Protestant church in Vienna, Bishop Berggrav of Norway, President of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES, preached to a large congregation, which included Sir Harold Caccia, British Minister and High Commissioner.

Bishop Berggrav prefaced his address by a statement about the history of Bible Society work in Austria during one hundred years, and emphasised the significance of its growth and development against a background of almost ceaseless political unrest, fluctuating national fortune and bitter loss and suffering in two world wars. He sounded the key-note for the celebrations in a moving sermon which left none of his hearers in doubt as to the urgency of the task confronting the Bible Societies of the world. It was a moving testimony to the power and relevance of the Book in an age when the Christian faith is being ruthlessly challenged on every hand, and it was vividly illustrated by examples from the Bishop's own experiences during the war years. In simple, but stirring words, he told how particular verses of Scripture had taken on a peculiar relevance to the situation in which he and other Norwegian believers had found themselves and testified to the help and the comfort which they had found in the Bible.

In the main speech of the Sunday afternoon, the Rev. W. J. Platt, General Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society in London, voiced the greetings of the parent Society, and outlined the challenge of the contemporary world situation, showing the significance of Bible Society work in the world to-day. He was followed by Monsieur Béguin, Pastor Vollenweider, and the Rev. H. M. Arrowsmith, who each brought greetings to the meeting, and emphasised the world-wideness of the task which faces the Bible Societies to-day, as well as stressing the need for collaboration in the fulfilment of this task. Bishop Berggrav spoke on the verse : "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty," pointing out that there is sufficient weakness of the wrong kind in the world, but that true weakness is dependence upon God. In a closing word, Bishop D. G. May, of the Lutheran Church in Austria, expressed his pleasure in participating in the celebrations, and the desire of his Church to share in the work of Bible distribution.

On the evening of 25th September, the Translations Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society addressed a large audience in one of the Methodist churches in Vienna on the subject : " The Word of God in 790 languages." Again very real interest was shown, and the audience was both responsive and appreciative.

So much for the main celebrations. For the writers, at least, one of the most memorable events of all was the visit to the Bible Depot on the day before the public services. Here the colporteurs and staff were assembled to speak to us of their work, and Mr. Uhl was able to tell us in detail of the way in which present opportunities in Austria are being taken up and developed. One was left with the impression of a strong and vital work in the hands of a small band of capable and devoted men and women, fully alive to the needs and difficulties, yet deeply convinced of the great importance of the task committed to them.

When the history of the Church in the last century comes to be written, one of the greatest contributions of Britain to the world, and not least to

Roman Catholic Europe, will be the prominence given by the British and Foreign Bible Society to the centrality of the open Bible, translated into the common speech of the people, taken to their very doors, and provided at a price they can pay.

In these Centenary gatherings in Vienna it was good to talk with the Roman Catholic Cardinal of Austria concerning a version of the Scriptures for Roman Catholics, a sign of new relations which may one day mean closer co-operation between us. It was thrilling to have a Roman Catholic New Testament professor speaking to the subsequent U.B.S. Regional Conference for over an hour, on the amazing change in outlook on the study and translation of the Scriptures which is taking place in the Roman Church, and of the decree of Pope Pius XII concerning the growing place which the Scriptures must have in the life of the Roman Church.

The Society and the Austrian Bible Committee owe to Mr. Karl Uhl a deep debt of gratitude for the labour expended on the organisation of the celebrations, the notable success of which is a very bright augury for the future.

Our picture of the world must not be unbalanced—a vital world Church is slowly being integrated. Let us pray that it may be seen and known for its Scriptural holiness and for its Christ-like compassion.

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE VIENNA CONFERENCE

JEAN BLUMENTHAL

OUR General Secretary had an excellent idea, when he proposed to make use of the centenary celebrations of Bible work in Austria to gather together in Vienna a small conference of European Bible Societies. Because of the distance involved, several of these had been unable to send a delegate to the last conference in New York, and it will also probably be difficult for them to be represented at the Council meeting planned for the winter of 1951/1952 in India. Thus this intermediate gathering gave them the opportunity for meeting for the very necessary discussion of common problems. On the other hand, it was also an occasion for the leaders of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES to study more closely those questions which the numerous administrative preoccupations of a large official conference prevent us from discussing at length. Finally, the Austrian Bible Committee, whose so very cordial hospitality will long remain in the memory of all the guests, was strengthened by these days of direct contact with the other members of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES and with the President, Bishop Berggrav, who—in spite of precarious health—honoured this meeting with his presence.

Three main questions were on the agenda for discussion, each of which would have sufficed for a conference on its own : (1) The Bible Societies and Bible distribution ; (2) Bible colportage ; and (3) The re-discovery of the Bible in the Roman Catholic church.

After a profound study, given by the Austrian Pastor Köster on the "Missionary Value of the Bible," Mr. A. L. Haig, Secretary for Europe of the British and Foreign Bible Society, gave a historical report on the work of the

Bible Societies from the beginning of the 19th century up to the present day. We then came to a study of the present situation and the delegates from Austria, Belgium and France showed in turn how the problem of Bible distribution presents itself in their respective countries, where there is a Roman Catholic majority, although the number of practising Catholics varies in each country. These reports, which were based on precise and actual facts, showed up the radical difference which exists between the conception of Bible work in these countries, where most people are completely ignorant of the Bible, and in the countries with a strong Protestant majority, such as Norway, where the real problem is not in distributing the Bible, but in getting those Bibles read which are in every home.

The Rev. W. J. Platt, General Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, showed how his Society had organised Bible work in England where the Society has no colporteurs, but where distribution is carried out through the book-trade and various religious organisations.

From Pastor Harts, who had stopped at Stuttgart on his way from Belgium, we had some echoes from Germany, whose delegates were unable to obtain their visas for Austria in sufficient time. The present problems for the Bible Societies in that country are : first of all, the constant work of revision of texts, then that of the modernisation of Bible editions, and finally that of the publication of Bible commentaries which, however, was recently turned down, as not being the work of the Bible Societies.

In the German-speaking part of Switzerland, Pastor Naegeli told us, there are problems with the dialects which would necessitate the publishing of Gospels in these dialects if certain groups of the population are to be reached. The difficulty in solving this problem is the absence of any written form of language, and the variety of the dialects spoken in the different Cantons.

Making use of their presence in Europe, invitations had been sent to the Rev. H. M. Arrowsmith, General Secretary-elect of the B.F.B.S. in Australia, and to Mr. F. Accad, sub-agent for the American Bible Society and the British and Foreign Bible Society in Syria/Lebanon, who both told us of the very different aspects of the interesting work in their respective areas.

The second day was largely devoted to the problem of present-day colportage, which was put before us in a balanced and precise manner by Mr. K. Uhl, the likeable agent of the Bible Society in Austria, whose qualities as an organiser and whose high conception of the spiritual responsibilities of a leader we had occasion to appreciate during the course of these days. Bishop May, explaining the particular situation of Austrian Protestantism, gave a fine testimony to the profound value of the work carried out by colporteurs and to the help which they render in this country where the population is so scattered. By the simple but powerful testimony of Mr. F. J. Kain, one of these colporteurs, we were then brought face to face with the practical problems which daily present themselves to those who work amongst the masses, and who come up against difficulties which can only be overcome by prayer.

During the discussion which followed, the various delegates gave a most interesting exchange of experiences. The recruiting and training of colporteurs is the dominant concern in certain countries, such as France. As the result of a satisfactory trial which had been made in this respect in France, where the Bible Society agent had sent out two trainees of the Institut Martin Bucer of Strasbourg in a van fitted out for colportage, Mr. Platt proposed that we

should consider the opening in this school of a training course to which prospective colporteurs in the European countries could be sent. The normal course of study being three years, these candidates would, after their first year, undertake a year of practical colportage and it would then be possible to judge whether their aptitude for this work would justify sending them for a further two years of training.

Another important point came out of the various discussions : the work of colportage is above all a work of sowing, which devolves more especially on the Bible Societies. However, once the seed is sown, it must be cared for, and that is the work of the Church. More than this, if the members of the churches had a greater sense of their responsibility toward all those who are ignorant of the Word of God, they would not only supply the Bible Societies with the colporteurs which are needed but they would also form teams of voluntary colporteurs. At a time when a real Biblical revival is to be found in the Protestant churches of most of the countries of Europe, it is good to draw their attention to this direct responsibility of Bible distribution, which is a form of witness to which they have not always given sufficient attention.

This rediscovery of the Bible is also to be found in the Roman Catholic church. In Austria, Dr. P. Parsch is the apostle of this movement, and he came himself to the conference to tell of the work which has been going on in his country for a quarter of a century and told how he himself has taken more than a thousand Bible studies. In his view, this revival is a path which leads to the unity of the Church.

Asked by Bishop Berggrav concerning the possibility of realising one further step towards this unity by the introduction of a joint Bible Sunday, our Roman Catholic visitor assured us that he thought such a plan might be feasible, at least in Austria, where the high members of the clergy would certainly be favourable.

Unfortunately, time was lacking to complete the work of Dr. Parsch by information from the representatives of other countries, where the Roman Catholic church is working along the same lines, and also to have a more detailed discussion on this most interesting subject.

Each of the two days of this conference was begun with morning prayers which were led by Pastor F. Mayr, Chairman of the Austrian Bible Committee on the first day, and by Pastor R. Vollenweider, Chairman of the Federation of Swiss Bible Societies on the second day. The final gathering, presided over by Bishop Berggrav, was an occasion for personal testimony, when several of those present were called upon to quote a verse of Scripture which had meant most to them during their life, and to give the reason.

Mr. Olivier Béguin, who was the father of this conference in Vienna, has reason to be proud of his child ! . . . . . We can indeed say that there was some good work done there. For our own part, we are persuaded that the sharing of experiences which were reported there will serve the Bible cause in each of the countries represented, and will also help the authorities of the United Bible Societies, who are faced with the concrete problems arising in each of these countries, to assist the Bible Societies in solving them in the spirit of their common vocation, as well as leading them to more faithful service.

PRESENT-DAY EXPERIENCES OF A BIBLE COLPORTEUR IN AUSTRIA

Franz Kain

BEFORE coming to my remarks on present-day experiences, I would ask for permission to give a short glance at the past, that is at the time previous to the last war, for Bible colportage has undergone considerable changes since that time.

Before the war it was very much easier to approach people, for they were more accessible, and thus the sale—especially of portions of the Bible—met with no great difficulties. People were indifferent and, for the most part did not buy out of a desire to possess God's Word, but rather in order to be left in peace.

In this respect things have changed entirely since the war. It is true that it has become more difficult to sell the Scriptures, but the general indifference to the Word of God has greatly decreased. Lukewarm and indifferent individuals can still only be persuaded with difficulty to buy God's Word, but on the other hand there are many who are longingly waiting for the Gospel of Redemption to be brought to them.

In another respect also there is a difference to be noticed. Formerly, New Testaments and portions were more in demand, while now more interest is shown in Bibles. I can speak from experience and remember that when my stock of Bibles has been exhausted and I have offered portions of the Bible for sale, I have been told : " If I buy the Word of God at all, I want to have the whole Bible." Then I make a note of the order and send a Bible by post. Nor is this a rare occurrence, on the contrary it has happened repeatedly during the years since the war, and the number of complete Bibles distributed confirms this fact.

Now we come to the question as to how this colportage work should be carried out. According to a survey I once made, I came to the conclusion that about 90% of the Roman Catholics and 70% of the Protestants possess no Bible. This shows that the work of Bible distribution must be continued in Austria, if we are ever again to arrive at the point where we once were, namely that the Bible may become the most widely read book and that all those who are now seeking the Truth, may possess the Word of God.

There are various ways and methods of attaining this end. One way would be through the parochial offices. And yet a clergyman can hardly be expected, besides all his other work of religious instruction and the care of his flock, to work also as a missionary in an inter-confessional way. The clergy cannot do more than see that there are Bibles in the homes and families of their own community. But all outsiders, whether Roman Catholics or Protestants, could not be reached by them alone.

A second way would be through booksellers, but this is not a successful way either of reaching the mass of the people. My own personal experiences are sufficient proof of this. Out of an hundred booksellers whom I have visited during the course of two years, only ten have expressed a readiness to take Bibles on commission. All the others flatly refused.

The last way open to us if we want to succeed in reaching searching humanity, is through the activity of Bible colporteurs. Of course, even amongst the faithful there are people who look down on the work of a colporteur and who do not expect much of his endeavours. Yet his activity is a blessing to the Church, to the community and to the entire people. He is not bound in any way to a special church or community for which he would have to gain disciples. His task consists purely in scattering the seed of God's Word, trusting in the promise that His Word will not return unto Him void.

What is very important if a colporteur wants to be successful, is that he should in his work allow himself to be led by God's Spirit and that he should thoroughly prepare himself for that work by prayer. His case is just the same as that of a preacher : to be a blessing to others, a preacher needs to engage in much prayer, and in the same way a Bible colporteur who wants to do blessed work must also pray much. I know from experience that I find success and open doors only when I have prepared my work prayerfully.

The colporteur has the advantage of not belonging to one particular town or parish. His scene of action is the whole countryside with its lonely valleys and villages. A true Bible colporteur does not fight shy of distances or the loneliest huts, and I have learnt that it really pays to visit the most out-of-the-way homesteads. One story out of many may serve as an illustration of this : As it was late and getting dark, I had to ask for a night's lodging at a very lonely farmhouse. There was no bed available in the house and so I was shown into the stable. This certainly was not a hospitable locality, and yet that stable became a church, for there I found a young man with a heart thirsting for God. We pored over the Bible until deep into the night and the young man confessed the sins of his youth to God, and bought a copy of the New Testament.

The Bible colporteur is a man of the open highroad. He wanders there during the year for innumerable miles, be it in the winter or in the burning heat of summer. A great deal depends upon the way in which he trudges along these roads—whether with open eyes and an ardent heart, or without noticing his fellow-men as he goes on his way. I personally have come to love the highroad, for it was there that I was often able to lead a human heart to Him who bore our sins upon Himself.

This reminds me in particular of a young man who, one hot day in July, took his midday rest under an oak tree. I joined him there, and it was not long before he had opened his heart to the gladdening message of the Gospel. The result was that he not only listened to the message, but also expressed a wish to possess the Book that contains it.

Or I think of that seventy-year old gypsy I met, one of a tribe of horse dealers who had never even heard of the Gospel. After I had told a Bible story to some children who were playing near by, the old man asked me to read something to him. I readily agreed and chose the 90th Psalm, which moved him so deeply that he could not but buy a New Testament.

Bible colporteurs must also, of course, travel by rail and by bus, and there too they are able to approach other travellers. It is when people are journeying, taken away for some hours from their usual round of domestic and economic troubles, that it becomes easier to talk to them of things necessary to their future life. I have had many a wonderful experience in this way and have been able to distribute a Bible or New Testament among the people.

A further opportunity is given to Bible colporteurs at festivals and fairs. There is no fair or festival at which soothsayers and fortune-tellers do not participate in an active way, and thus at a popular festival in Wels I was able to persuade many people not to have their fortune told, or to tear up the horoscope they had received.

It is impossible now to go into more detail about the various opportunities for our work, although there still remains a good deal to be said on the subject, especially in connection with our activity in hospitals and other such places. We have yet to ask ourselves whether Bible colportage work is still necessary at the present time. We have seen that clergy and booksellers have no opportunity of carrying on this work, for only those who, of themselves, desire to possess the Word of God are within their reach. Yet there are still countless people living out of the reach of church and community, and inaccessible to priests and preachers, who feel a longing for the Word of God.

I remember one woman, a native of Hungary, who was living as the only Hungarian amongst refugees of other nationalities. When I met her and was able to offer her a Hungarian Bible she said : "At last my prayer has been answered. I have been praying for this for a whole year." Exactly the same thing happened to a young man who was working for a farmer : he told me he had long been praying for a copy of the Hungarian Bible, and how happy and thankful he was when I offered him one. On another occasion I was told how happy life in a certain family had become, how different and how delightful, since they had had a Bible in the house to read.

There is a definite call for the Bible and everywhere in our country people are to be found who are waiting for God's Word. Times are serious and hard, and we know not how long we may have to fulfil this calling. It is my opinion, therefore, that as many books as possible should be circulated, so that our possibly brief respite may be turned to good account.

The service of the Bible colporteur is more urgently needed than ever, for from all sides—from north, south, east and west—we hear the cry : "Come and help us!"

VOLUNTARY BIBLE COLPORTAGE IN ITALY

GUIDO R. MIEGGE

I HAD already noticed before the war the difficulty our ordinary colporteurs had in visiting certain places, and in travelling without too great an expense in provinces where they had not been before and where, consequently, their sales of Scriptures remained very low. Since then we have been through further financial difficulties which have prevented us paying salaries or travelling expenses for them, and I have been obliged to give serious thought to the problem of colportage work on an entirely voluntary basis. We have had some experience of this several times previously, and these experiences gave me the idea of trying to develop this kind of colportage again.

The established evangelical churches in Italy (Waldensian, Methodist and Baptist) have no organised Bible colportage. In a few cases they have

organised the sale of religious books in their churches, but as in most instances the services are attended almost entirely by their own members, and only very few outsiders visit them, these book stalls cannot really be considered as colportage work.

In addition these churches do not cover geographically the whole of the country. Their development during the last 25-50 years has not been due to any large organised efforts, but rather has been governed by local circumstances. Furthermore, the churches' activity in the towns has become very greatly " traditional." The real new phenomenon in religious life in Italy during these last years has been the outburst and rapid expansion of the Pentecostalist movement. Pentecostalists now number probably more than a half of the whole evangelical group in Italy, and going forth into all areas they make great use of the Bible in their evangelistic activities. Actually, therefore, it is not the " churches " but the " sects " who are really active in the work of Bible distribution.

Since the Pentecostalists use the old Diodati translation in their work we still have to publish it, and we sell more copies of this translation than we do of the revised Luzzi version, although the latter is certainly the better of the two. We sell almost four Diodati Bibles to every one revised Luzzi Bible.

In organising our voluntary colportage we have taken this situation into account, but we have at the same time tried not to tie the work down to any system. We now have 93 voluntary colporteurs working in 66 towns and villages—38 south of Rome and 28 in the north. Nearly all denominations are represented among them (Methodists, Pentecostalists, Adventists, Christ Church and so on), and their sales run into between 20,000 and 40,000 copies a year—but this is only a beginning.

We give the colporteurs a 50% reduction on the catalogue prices (except for de luxe editions), and the despatch and postal expenses of the books are met by us. We allow a reasonable delay for payment, but we do not renew consignments unless payment for previous deliveries has been made. In this way we are sure that the books are really sold and not thrown away.

Our volunteers include manual workers, teachers, office workers, newspaper boys and so on, and most of them are able to circulate the Scriptures only during the weekend. They are working in places all over the country and in this way we can reach areas very far away, some of which we have tried in vain to reach in the days of regular colportage.

A particular feature of Bible work in Italy to-day is the unexpected interest in the complete Bible. Our colporteurs themselves sell quite a number of them and it would be impossible to try to sell only New Testaments and Portions, for it is whole Bibles that are needed and asked for in Italy at the present time. People want to know what it is and if we insist on offering them Testaments only, instead of the Bible, the answer we get is : " What ! ' Ersatz ' again ! " So many substitutes (Ersatz) were given to them during the war instead of real food.

This work of voluntary colportage offers a new opportunity for spreading the Word of God in Italy. It will be our task to support and extend it ; but it is also our wish that the churches should take an active share in the work of making the Bible known wherever the Christian message is still unknown.

COLPORTAGE WORK IN THE RIVER PLATE REGION

(*Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay*)

CHARLES W. TURNER

THE British and Foreign Bible Society and the American Bible Society in the River Plate region, as occurs throughout Latin America, are closely related to all the churches and missions as the suppliers of the indispensable Scriptures, without which their work would be sorely handicapped. These are provided not only in the Spanish language, but also in several Indian dialects, for both national churches and missionary workers, as well as in the Braille system for the blind and in appropriate forms for new literates.

But not only do the Bible Societies supply the Scriptures. They do this at the lowest possible cost to local churches and individuals with a view to making the Bible available to as large a number of people as possible, so that the price of the Book shall be no handicap to its acquisition. This is the Bible Societies' reason for being.

In their co-operation with the churches and with pastors and other accredited workers, therefore, the Bible Societies go still further by providing liberal discounts for the distribution of Bibles, New Testaments and especially Gospels, when utilised for planned evangelistic programmes. To such an extent is this co-operation offered that the cost of Scriptures can really constitute no barrier whatever to any local church that has the vision of the vital need for vigorous evangelism in its community, and seems to meet its responsibility by ministering to that need. We work on the principle that the Bible Societies exist to make the Scriptures readily available for each and every class of evangelistic requirement, in any language or dialect, in any place they may be needed and at the lowest possible cost.

The work of evangelism through Scripture distribution is being promoted in the River Plate region on an ever increasing scale so that as much territory as possible may be thoroughly covered by capable and experienced men. This region is so greatly under-churched from the evangelical standpoint, and the shortage of pastors is so manifest while the need is clamant, that we feel all effective persons who can hear the call and can be inspired to answer it should be given their part to do in an increasing evangelistic programme. For this purpose, besides the few employed colporteurs maintained on the permanent staff and the several hundred correspondents or re-sellers who usually do not engage in active colportage, the Bible Societies in the River Plate region have developed two additional groups for Bible workers.

The first of these is that of the "Part-time colporteur-evangelist." Such a person, whether a pastor, missionary or layman, can usually engage in Scripture distribution only intermittently because of his denominational activities and responsibilities. He receives a special discount on the Scriptures he requires and his period of work may cover no more than from three to six months of the year. Some of the most effective Scripture distribution is performed by part-time colporteur-evangelists who either are pastors and missionaries with large circuits, or trained laymen actively carrying on evangelistic labours. At present there are over 80 such part-time workers, co-operating with the Bible Societies in the River Plate region.

The second group is composed of persons known as "Special colporteur-evangelists in full-time service." These men are set apart and partially

supported by their respective local church or denomination, and work under their direction, while the Bible Societies supply them with the Scriptures required at generous discounts (usually, though not necessarily, larger than for the first group), thus making possible for each worker an adequate total support. The rate of discount in this category varies in accordance with the type of colportage undertaken. If the work is urban colportage, where sales are usually more numerous and expenses lower, the discount may be 50%. Colportage in rural regions is more expensive; the percentage of discount therefore is proportionately larger. For colportage done along the rivers of the interior where it is much needed, we are glad to grant as much as 100%. Thus, with the fixed support provided by his local church or denomination plus the returns from Scriptures sold, the special colporteur-evangelist receives a fully adequate income. There are eight special colporteur-evangelists in full-time service working in our field.

From the standpoint of the Bible Societies, both these types of co-operative Scripture distribution arrangements are worthwhile. In the first, they contribute to increasing Scripture distribution since more persons can be secured for the work, and consequently much more ground can be covered with competent workers. Then, too, the supervision of the workers is primarily in the hands of the local church or denomination that appoints the colporteur-evangelist. The work carried out with a definite purpose in view and under such supervision is likely to be well done. Both these factors further contribute to economy as regards the Bible Societies' resources. While the Societies grant liberal discounts for these classes of workers, it is obvious that these discounts amount to far less than the total support of the workers involved. The actual support of the workers is *shared* by the Bible Societies and the churches.

There are real advantages also in this co-operative type of effort from the standpoint of the local church or denomination. Besides providing them with an opportunity for active participation in the work of Scripture distribution which is essential for integrating the Bible Societies and their activity into the total effort of the evangelical churches of these lands, both these important types of Scripture distribution arrangements obviously constitute powerful aids to church extension, to parish growth and influence, to community consciousness concerning the place and vital importance of the Scriptures in the personal and church life of evangelical Christianity, and to the consolidation of fields newly opened up, whether rural or urban.

The formation last year of interdenominational Advisory Councils in Argentina and Uruguay, is, we find, contributing substantially in promoting colportage of all types. The purpose of the Bible Societies in the formation of these bodies was to provide the national churches and their leaders with (1) an opportunity for becoming acquainted with the work and programme of the Societies in preparation for their assumption in due course of greater responsibility in the direction of the work, and also with (2) an added incentive to help the Societies interpret their work and purpose to the denominational constituencies represented on the Councils. The close contacts maintained by the Bible Societies with the members of the Advisory Councils, together with the definitely increased interest of the members after having been invited to come together as a Council, necessarily result in the development of deeper understanding and appreciation of our work and its abiding merits, and of the permanent contribution that evangelism through Scripture distribution can make toward the upbuilding and extension of both the local churches and the denominations.

FRIENDS OF THE BIBLE IN EGYPT

LEONARD F. GEARY

IT is not unusual to find scattered throughout the world, various groups of Christian believers who place extreme importance and value upon the reading of the Word of God for matters both of faith and practice. One of these groups, perhaps lesser known, is to be found within the Coptic Church of Egypt. The story of the Coptic Church in Egypt is an amazing record of survival amid the persecutions of history, and one of the many contributions that accordingly it can offer is a maturity of strength. To-day this strength is finding expression in an aggressive forward movement of reform, particularly in evangelism and Bible study and is being led by an organization within its own ranks, known as the " Friends of the Bible Coptic Society."

The Friends of the Bible Coptic Society has been established since 1908, but at the present is entering into a new lease of life. Its youthful Committee and members are contributing a zeal and enthusiasm for Christian work and witness that is quickly becoming progressive and far-reaching. As the name of the Society suggests, the aim is wholly concerned with the Bible as the Word of God. The reading of the Bible ; the understanding of its teaching ; the interpretation of social conditions according to the Christian standard ; the obeying of the injunctions of Christ ; and the awakening of faith in the heart of the individual ; all tend to enable the member to see the things of this world in the light of things eternal. Those responsible for the movement are able to give definite instances where men and women have sought a new infilling of the Spirit of God and have served Him more faithfully within His Church through the meditative reading of His Word.

The present membership, totalling almost 10,000, is divided between 44 branches scattered over the towns of Egypt and is comprised largely of young men. Each wears a badge depicting an open Bible surrounded by a heart-shaped background, upon which is written in Arabic the verse : " Thy Word have I hid in my heart." The promise exacted from the members is that they will read each day a portion of the Bible, usually about one chapter. To maintain uniformity, the Committee has drawn up each year an agreed syllabus of readings which is used throughout all the branches. Apart from daily readings, the members meet in their branch groups each week during the winter months and share together in Bible study. The topics that are considered are practical and deal with the relevance of the Scriptures in the light of the problems of modern man. At one of these gatherings I was deeply impressed with the seriousness of the members as they dealt with the problems of evil. Not only content with study which could remain largely subjective, these Friends of the Bible include an objective and constructive programme that reaches out far beyond the borders of their branches. To relate their reading and study to the problems of every day many young men go off into the villages and schools and homes, taking with them their Bibles with the intention of teaching others. In the main this is a voluntary service, often beset with hardships and disappointments, but which is producing results that are being noticed and which cannot be belittled. Using their spare time, such a group of some six young men will invade a bus, descend upon a village, find those that are able to read and share with them the content of the Scriptures, later leaving behind some portion for the people to continue reading. Others, unable to read, will cautiously gather round and listen—

often expecting that those who can read will carry on the narrative after the Bible Friends have left. Two American missionaries have related how that in their itineraries they paid a visit to the town of Sohag in Upper Egypt, and found that the influence of these Bible reading visitors had made such an impression that they felt ashamed of their own efforts. The zeal and dauntless courage of these young men in their efforts to build up a Bible-reading group cannot adequately be put into words. From various centres in Upper Egypt stories of reform, expansion within the Church, and general evangelism are so current that many missionaries and other Christian workers within the country are beginning to realise that this is a challenge to reorientate their own thinking and endeavour.

In the city of Cairo, the Society has purchased three houses which are being used as residences for University students. Many who come up to the various faculties are at a loss to know where to live, and wisely the Friends of the Bible have provided homes for young men where Bible reading becomes a daily feature and where Sunday services become part of the weekly programme. Again these efforts meet with success for the houses are always full, with a waiting list for vacancies. In the summer, a camp at Alexandria and other smaller camps along the banks of the Nile are provided for the members, where, while enjoying relaxation and holiday, each can avail himself of an opportunity to gather around the study of the Bible. Conferences held annually become the focus meeting place of all the members and at each gathering a constructive programme is planned for the following year. The Committee of 14 members is fully occupied in developing the work agreed upon, and eleven of them accept responsibility for a different department—such as residences, clubs, magazine, etc.

In recent years a ladies' section of the Friends of the Bible has been inaugurated and though separate and apart from the older work, it is concentrating upon work in schools and hospitals. The Society is responsible for six schools where all the students are admitted free and where provision is made for regular Bible teaching. Hospitals and the care of children within orphanages become a work of love around the teaching of the Scriptures.

The great difficulty that faces the members of the Friends of the Bible is that no support is forthcoming from outside sources. No encouragement is offered from secular authorities, while hindrances are often encountered. One problem is to obtain the Scriptures that are required for the furtherance and maintenance of the work. Each member is expected to have his own copy of the Bible and this is not always possible. It is in this particular sphere that the Bible Society is presented with a challenge.

The Coptic Church, although conducting part of its service in the Coptic language, has always read its lesson from the Arabic Scriptures. Consequently the Arabic Bible offered by the Bible Society has for many years found its place within the life and worship of the Church. It is impossible to define borders of blessing and help, but inasmuch as the Friends of the Bible have gained their inspiration of Him Who is the Living Word from their regular meditation of the written Word, it can only be assumed that the Bible Society has had some share in the blessing which has followed. This in its turn becomes a responsibility to provide the needed volumes of Arabic Scriptures so that each man, in his own church, in his own village, in his own tongue, might read of Christ, the Friend and Saviour of men.

THE BIBLE SOCIETIES AND BIBLE DISTRIBUTION IN BELGIUM

JACQUES HARTS

AFTER a remarkable success in the sixteenth century, the preaching of the Gospel which was then stifled by the violent oppression of the Spanish régime, was confined to several isolated places off the main routes of communication. It revived in the nineteenth century under the influence of the British and Foreign Bible Society. This Society opened its first depot in Brussels in 1835 and during the first eight years of this depot's activity, 110,000 copies of Scripture were sold and distributed. In 1837, on the initiative of the Secretary of this Society in Brussels, William P. Tiddy, the *Société Evangélique Belge*, later called the *Eglise Chrétienne Missionnaire Belge* was constituted. During the first century of its existence this Society gave an important place to Bible colportage. From 1837 to 1887 it had in its service 54 pastors and 34 Bible colporteurs. The activity of the latter was responsible for the founding of some 40 evangelical communities. This period was characterised by a theology and a church life strongly centred in the Bible, and by an ardent zeal for evangelisation on the part of a people plunged in intellectual and religious obscurantism. During this period the colporteur was also known as a " reader of the Bible." He would read the Scriptures to those who procured a copy, thus introducing an illiterate people to the text of the Bible.

From the end of the nineteenth century onwards, and until 1920, there was a decline in Bible colportage corresponding to a strong influence of the critical theology of the school of Wellhausen, and to an arrest or slackening of evangelisation in many parts of the country.

After the end of the first world war a number of new missionary works sprang up in Belgium, continuing the spiritual work which had been begun amongst the troops in the field. At first they used the methods of mass distribution of tracts and Bible portions, but these were soon abandoned. But their zeal for evangelisation continued and led other churches to reconsider their responsibility to take the Word of God indefatigably to the Belgian people. To these new works, which were founded on the methodism and fundamentalism of the United States, were added in the course of the last thirty years Pentecostal communities, new Brethren assemblies, and new centres of the Salvation Army. Thus from 1920 to 1950 the number of evangelical communities rose from 106 to 223. From the point of view of theology these new works were based on a very strict Biblicism, while in the " historical " churches the salutary influence of the theology of Karl Barth was to be seen in a good number of pastors.

At the present time the Belgian Bible Society, founded in November, 1947, has a team of Bible colporteurs, several of whom have already had a long career of service with the British and Foreign Bible Society and the National Bible Society of Scotland. These colporteurs have been and continue to be the initiators of voluntary colportage. The Belgian Bible Society has established further contacts with all the churches and evangelistic works

active in Belgium and enjoys their confidence. Apart from the ordinary activities of a Bible Society, it endeavours to revive or intensify in all communities a sense of responsibility in the question of evangelisation and distribution of the Word of God.

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Seen from outside, Belgian Protestantism is but a very feeble minority, estimated at about 1/200th of the population, and this in spite of the fact that the number of communities has doubled in the last 30 years. Amongst others, three factors may be mentioned which explain this state of weakness :

(1) The multiplicity of Protestant ecclesiastical forms, often maintained for purely secondary reasons. This provokes uneasiness amongst Protestants themselves and turns many souls away from the evangelical message of salvation.

(2) The rigid position taken by the Roman Catholic Church, which considers any Protestant community as heretical and which, on the whole, continues to keep the people from the Word of God.

(3) As a reaction against the Roman Catholic church, which covers the Social Christian Party with its authority, non-Catholic political circles reject *en bloc* anything which bears the name of Christian, including the church and any religious conceptions. The Belgian people have continually to be reminded that the Word of God and the preaching of it are not identified with a reactionary political party.

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Facing the future, the Belgian Bible Society considers that it is its duty :

(1) To continue its work of Bible colportage and even to increase it within the realm of possibility, in a country of 9 million inhabitants which is a field of activity practically without limit.

(2) To act as rallying point for all evangelical believers, isolated or in groups, who have received the vocation to distribute the Word of God amongst their compatriots.

(3) To bring the churches to a better understanding of their responsibility in home missionary work, and to make those who have not yet taken up any such activity more conscious of their responsibility in this respect.

The situation in our country as a whole shows that the time is peculiarly appropriate for a more extended and deeper work in the realm of Bible distribution amongst the very populated industrial centres, where work has been carried on for a long time, as well as in the agricultural provinces which have so far been very little touched by the preaching of the Gospel.

To fulfil its mission, the Belgian Bible Society needs well-prepared workers who are Christians founded on the Word of God, courageous and persevering, able to find a way into hearts and minds concerned about salvation. It also needs the faithful support of the Bible Societies who, for a long time have been concerned about the spiritual needs of the Belgian people, so strongly marked by the effect of a Roman Catholicism far removed from the Word of God.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE GERMAN BIBLE SOCIETIES

Olivier Béguin

THE *Verband der Evangelischen Bibelgesellschaften in Deutschland* held its annual meeting in Hannover on October 3rd and 4th. Most of the Bible Societies of the Western Zone were represented, but only one Society of the Eastern Zone was able to send a delegate for part of the meeting.

Reports were given on the activity of the Verband. During the past year the Verband distributed free of charge from its own stocks or from stocks put at its disposal by the American Bible Society about 22,500 complete Bibles, 10,200 New Testaments, 30,000 Portions, 2,000 critical editions (Kittel, Nestlé, etc.), and 1,400 expurgated youth Bibles and concordances. Three-fifths of these deliveries were made to German refugees in the Western Zone or to addresses given by the A.B.S. ; the balance was sent to the Eastern Zone.

Pastor Fisch, travelling secretary of the Verband, reported a keen interest in Bible work in the churches which he had visited and expressed the conviction that if suitable follow-up work could be given to his visits, the German Bible Societies would soon find the active support of large sections of the church. During ten months of activity Pastor Fisch had held over 275 meetings—not including church services—in churches, schools, church groups, camps, prisons, hospitals, etc., reaching about 20,000 people. In most cases no collection was taken owing to the present circumstances and owing to the special object of these visits, which was mainly an attempt to make Christians and church people aware of their responsibilities in the work of Bible distribution.

The meeting decided to invite audiences and possible friends of the Bible Societies to show their interest by special gifts for Bible work. It was also resolved to publish a small quarterly bulletin of information which would help to keep the " friends of the Bible " informed of the world-wide activity of the Bible Societies. Member Societies were also invited to seek more effective support from the churches and improve collaboration in the sphere of the evangelistic activities of the churches.

Much time was also devoted to discussing the difficult problem of supplying Scriptures for refugees and others with limited financial means. Opinions as to the financial capacity of such groups differed considerably, and the concern was repeatedly expressed that, although Bibles should be given free of cost or at a reduced price to those of limited means, this should be done in such a way that church members should not be encouraged to think that free distribution is the normal way of circulating the Scriptures, as many are inclined to think. It was generally admitted that the needs among refugees and bombed-out people are mostly noticeable among the children, who begin religious instruction. Generally there is one Bible available in the family, but the purchase of a Bible for the child sometimes seems to present difficulties. In a great many cases, however, it would appear that the means could be found, were the Bible an object of real interest. This was later confirmed to me by the expert on refugee questions in the chancellory of the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland. The meeting seriously debated the question as to whether it is the responsibility of a Bible Society to adopt a policy of free distribution of the Scriptures in cases

where it appears that people do not want to pay for a Bible, not so much because of their financial inability to do so, but because of a lack of interest in the Bible.

This question, closely related as it is to the problem of evangelism, was not solved. It was, however, decided (1) to ask member Societies to make an immediate and careful study of the situation in their respective areas ; (2) to make available a first donation of several thousand Bibles in order to meet the needs where they seem to be the most urgent ; and (3) to give special attention at a forthcoming meeting, to the problem of the place of the Bible in evangelism.

The meeting also took note of the fact that the Verband is now giving partial financial support to the salary of a colporteur engaged by a society for Bible distribution. Similar co-operation with another evangelistic group in Bavaria is under consideration. It was also reported from Eastern Germany that the question of Bible colportage is being considered by the Altenburg Bible Society in co-operation with the churches.

Special emphasis was laid upon the importance of the German contribution to the world-wide task of Bible distribution. A preliminary concrete project is under discussion for the publication of a Batak Gospel, which may be printed in co-operation with the Netherlands Bible Society ; the possibilities of further developments along similar lines have still to be examined, but it was unanimously agreed that more effective sharing of responsibility with the other Bible Societies of the world could only help the German Societies in their attempt to awaken interest in Bible Society work among the Christians in Germany.

Finally, it was decided to proceed with the printing of the last revision of the Luther text, and the printing Societies, particularly Stuttgart for Western Germany, were requested to begin the setting up as soon as possible.

The 1950 meeting of the Verband has certainly marked a new step forward in the way of the effective participation of the German Bible Societies in the common task of the Bible Societies co-operating in the U.B.S. The financial situation of the German Societies is, however, still a difficult one. Church collections or individual contributions which they receive are not yet sufficient to enable them to make all the desired reductions on Scriptures for catechumens and young married couples. In this connection the need for a better co-ordinated policy was evident, but the conception of the necessity for supporting joint work with the foreign Bible Societies on the world field, still remains somewhat confused. It was also a comfort to the Editor of the *Bulletin*, to find that through this channel the concern for the world-wide task of the Bible Societies is being more and more shared by others, and that all the members showed a keen interest in the reports and other material published by the foreign Societies, which were circulated on the occasion of the meeting.

There was not much discussion about the situation in Eastern Germany. Information was scarce and in a sense the position has not essentially changed. The need for Scriptures is still great and the technical problems which arise in production are still numerous and nerve-racking. But although Eastern Germany was not a matter for discussion, the situation there was the intimate concern of all those who attended the meeting, as it is the great question mark that dominates all life in Germany, and it was the prayer of all that there too the Word of God may continue to be circulated for the comfort and hope and peace of mind of all men.

THE U.B.S. BOOTH AT THE WORLD CONVENTION

Toronto, August, 1950.

William H. Hudspeth

THE United Bible Societies was one of the six ecumenical organisations invited to send fraternal delegates to the thirteenth World Convention on Christian Education, the other five ecumenical organisations being the Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., W.S.C.F., the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council. Each of these six organisations was also invited to send materials for exhibit. It was the privilege of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Canada to represent the United Bible Societies in setting up a booth in the main Exhibits Building of the Convention. The booth was small, but we believe that it truly represented the work of the United Bible Societies.

The main feature of the exhibit was a map of the world, showing the principal centres of Bible Society work everywhere. Forty-seven flashing lights marked 22 cities which are headquarters of the national Societies, and 25 the regional headquarters for areas which as yet have no national organisation. Little squares in the centre of each continent gave the total circulation of Scriptures for 1948 (the last year for which complete figures were available), and the number of languages in which God's Word is currently circulated in that continent. Miss Urquhart, the secretary for visual aids, carefully checked all reports to find the total number of languages in which Scriptures are being circulated at the present time. On counting up, the total was found to be between 860 and 875. The main " title " on the map therefore read : " The United Bible Societies serve in every continent, work in 90 countries, circulate the Scriptures in over 860 languages."

There was also a chart in which vividly coloured bars showed : (*a*) the growth in the number of translations since the founding of the first Bible Society in 1804 ; (*b*) the proportion of the world's number of translations (1,000) for which the Bible Societies are directly responsible (90%) ; and (*c*) the relative numbers of languages in which there are complete Bibles, New Testaments or only portions.

The rest of the wall space was taken up by brightly coloured posters in eight languages. Over and over again enquiries were made as to where such posters could be obtained. Sunday school teachers repeatedly said that if only they could have two or three of these interesting Bible Society posters in different languages, it would help to make the children whom they teach aware that the Bible is a world Book. The eight languages in which there were posters were : English, French, Flemish, Spanish, Portuguese, Greek, German and Chinese.

On one side of the booth was a table which was difficult to keep tidy since delegates kept picking up the exhibits to look at them. Along the edge of the table ran the title : " God's Word in the languages of the convention delegates." At the outset there were 35 such exhibits, but at the finish these had grown to 43. Delegates from Asia and Africa kept visiting the booth and saying : " You have not got my language." " Just tell us what it is and we will get it out" was Miss Urquhart's reply. "We were not sure there was a delegate here who spoke that language." Three of the volumes displayed were not really the language of any delegates, but they attracted a great deal

of attention—the Hebrew Old Testament, and the Greek and Latin New Testaments. Judging by the number of visitors who knew Greek and Hebrew it can safely be said that these two ancient tongues are still the international languages of pastors and religious workers.

India was the country which needed most books to represent its languages, for there were Indian delegates speaking Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Telegu and Malayalam. The Scandinavian delegates seemed to be able to read the largest number of languages. Over and over again comments of wonder and admiration were heard that people who read God's Word in so many languages should be gathered together in one united fellowship. It is, however, even more wonderful to think that the languages represented were only 5% of the total number of tongues in which the Bible Societies are circulating the Scriptures. Little cards were made for each book indicating : the name of the language, the portion of the Bible on display, and a tiny outline map of the continent ; where the language is spoken in only a single country that area was painted in solid black.

The letters along the edge of the second table on the opposite side of the booth spelled out the words : " Use Bible Society publications for projects about the Bible and the World Church." Here were displayed the monthly and quarterly magazines of all the Societies it had been possible to contact. There were periodicals from the United States of America, Brazil, Mexico (the magazine from Mexico is used all over Spanish-speaking Latin America), the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Japan, England and Scotland. There were also on display the new illustrated Gospels in French and English, the National Bible Society of Scotland's booklet : " Each in his own language," and the British and Foreign Bible Society's " Mary Jones and her Bible " as told for boys and girls. Several popular or annual reports from different countries were also included. In addition there were small pamphlets in French, Spanish, Portuguese and Italian. These were just as popular with the delegates of American high-school age as with those for whom one of these languages is the mother tongue. Young Canadians who study French in school, young Americans who study Spanish, were eager to get a pamphlet about the Bible in the language they were learning.

Copies of " The Bible Society Record," " The Bible in the World " and " For Every Land " were much appreciated. Many people familiar with " The Bible in the World " learned for the first time that there is also a children's magazine which can be of great help to all engaged in Christian education. For those already familiar with their own Society's magazine, there were copies of the United Bible Societies Bulletin. There were many missionaries at the conference who greatly appreciated whatever copies of " The Bible Translator " were available. Others who asked for this publication were those with close relatives on some mission field and young people looking forward to missionary service.

Some half-dozen Bible Society secretaries who attended the conference visited the booth, and many other visitors spoke of their friendship with the Secretary in Mexico or Jamaica, in Buenos Aires or Rio de Janeiro.

There were visitors who wanted to know why Melbourne or Winnipeg or Chicago was not on the map, or some one of the other district depots or Bible Houses. It had to be explained that to have marked every Bible House in the world would have needed a map much, much larger than the booth could hold.

There were 61 countries represented at the Convention, and at one time or another delegates from almost every one of them visited the booth, which was undoubtedly not only a reminder to workers in Christian education that the Bible in their mother tongue is a vital part of their equipment, but also a visible manifestation of that oneness in Christ which made the fellowship at the Toronto Convention so deep and real.

Delegates from Latin America were delighted to see amidst the display a copy of " La Biblia En America Latina." All of them who visited the booth were familiar with this magazine and proud of the way in which its circulation has grown since it was first issued. It was obvious the Protestant religious workers in Latin America are familiar with the work of the Bible Society, and value the contribution of Bible Society secretaries to the religious life of Latin America.

NEWS FROM ALL THE WORLD

Under this heading we do not intend to give only information on the Bible Societies but we also want to include such facts as may or should have a bearing on Bible Society work. This information should therefore not only tell us what other Societies are doing, but should also help us to apprehend the whole realm of our common responsibilities and should lead us to think out how best we may extend our own activity in the future, in such a way as to fulfil our calling to the utmost.

Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay

IT has been well known for many decades that there have been important foreign language groups in the River Plate region: Italians, Germans, Russians, Japanese, Hebrews, besides the large number of Anglo-Saxons, etc. These groups have always been ministered to by the Bible Societies through the provision of Scriptures in their own mother tongue.

In more recent years, however, owing to the pressure of events in Europe, some of these groups have been added to considerably. Furthermore, certain religious sects such as Mennonites from northern Germany and Waldensians from the north of Italy have come to Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay in large numbers, in quest of new homes and a new life and opportunity.

The Bible Societies have been kept informed concerning the periodic arrival of groups of refugees, and they have been followed up either by a colporteur-evangelist of their own nationality, specially engaged by the Societies for the purpose, or by one of the Societies' own colporteurs.

The foreign language churches in these countries have also done their part in assisting these refugee groups. Frequently they have come to us for Scriptures to be distributed among their newly-arrived fellow-countrymen. This has been especially noticeable among refugees speaking German and Russian.

Australia

A Report has been received from the General Secretary of the *B.F.B.S. in Australia* on the subject of the Society's activity in the realm of publications in aborigine languages for Australia, New Guinea, Papua and the South Pacific Islands.

5,000 Gospels of St. Mark in Fijian, 1,000 of the Four Gospels & Acts in Rennellese, and 5,000 of the Four Gospels & Acts in Orokolo are now being printed in Australia.

Scriptures in other languages still need some revision or correction, and requests for the printing (or reprinting) of books in three other languages have recently come in. They are : Toaripi New Testament and Psalms ; Tangoa Matthew, John, Acts and Galatians (revised), Mark and 1st Corinthians (new translation) ; and the New Testament in Aniwa. This last language is spoken by a group of only 200 people on an island of the same name.

The following paragraph about the Manus (Usiai) language gives some idea of the difficulties and problems which are met in this work :

" Manus is an island of the Admiralty Group off the north coast of New Guinea. Many languages are spoken there, all of the Melanesian family, the chief of which is Usiai, which is the mother-tongue of about 1,000 people. It is understood, however, by about 2,000 people belonging to the Matankor and Simanus tribes.

" The New Testament in this language was prepared by missionaries of the Liebenzeller Mission and three copies made. At the outbreak of war, Pastor and Mrs. F. Walter were interned by the Australian authorities but the remaining missionaries were allowed to continue their work unmolested. When the Japanese arrived they permitted the work to continue for about a year. Then a native, who was tortured by the invaders to make him reveal what the evacuated Australian authorities had done with their papers, said that a box of forms had been deposited at the Mission. The Japanese discovered and confiscated the box. Later the missionaries were ordered, at a day's notice, to leave for Rabaul. On the way there the Japanese shot them and threw their bodies into the sea. In this massacre perished two married couples, a mission Sister and a baby of fourteen months.

" At the conclusion of hostilities Pastor and Mrs. Walter were allowed to return to their work on Manus Island. It was thought that the Japanese had destroyed the three copies of the New Testament, but later one copy was found in the Eastern Zone of Berlin and was sent to Manus Island for revision. This work has now been completed, although it was decided at a conference between Pastor Walter, Dr. Capell and the Commonwealth Secretary, that the orthography of the language should be revised. Pastor Walter has now left for furlough in Germany and has taken the manuscript with him. He expects to have time to complete this revision while on furlough."

Belgium

The *Belgian Bible Society* has started to print in Holland an edition of the French Segond Bible with references. The same type and presentation are being used for this edition as for the new Dutch reference Bible.

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In the 1949/1950 report of the Eglise Chrétienne Missionnaire Belge there is the following paragraph :

" In the past our church had in her service many Bible colporteurs, but for several years now she has had none at all. The Church Council therefore asked the pastors to devote one or two hours a week for a month to that particular form of ministry, and several answered the call. During one month 143 Gospels, 31 New Testaments and 2 Bibles were circulated. But more important than this, is the fact that addresses were taken of 50 persons who had been stirred by the message of the Word of God."

Brazil

The British and Foreign Bible Society in London have just received a report from their representative in Brazil, Mr. C. H. Morris, a secretary of the *Bible Society of Brazil*, describing a journey he made in the Amazon region and in the little known northern parts of Brazil. Mr. Morris has this year celebrated his 21st anniversary in the service of the Society.

His journey was divided into two great loops, the one starting from Para (Belem) at the mouth of the Amazon and extending a thousand miles down its course, and the other encircling the coastal regions to the east as far as Fortaleza (Ceara). Here are a few extracts from Mr. Morris' report :

" In the town of Manaos, 1,000 miles from the Atlantic coast, I was encouraged in my task by the wholehearted co-operation I enjoyed from all groups ..... The installation of the Regional Auxiliary Committee in the first Baptist Church of the town, the oldest, largest and best-known evangelical establishment, was an overflow affair. Fortunately there was a public address system functioning in the church building and it was therefore possible for many people who could not enter the building to follow the ceremony while seated on its steps and even on the kerbstones of the street .....

" Back again at the mouth of the Amazon, I spent twelve days in the town of Belem, Para, preached in nearly all the churches of the town and secured a considerable amount of space in the local press, a thing which is never easy in this country." The Pastor of the Pentecostal Church lent the building, seating 2,000 people, for a special gathering and Mr. Morris reports : " The meeting was billed to begin at 7.30, but at 7 o'clock the large building was full and still from every bus people eagerly made their way to the church they could not enter. Some omnibuses were specifically hired to bring in people from the suburbs and were drawn up in front of the building in order to accommodate many who otherwise would have been compelled to stand outside or to return home. Hundreds could take part in the service only by hearing the loudspeaker outside relaying the ceremony. The local Press stated that more than 3,000 people attended. The chief speaker of the evening was Dr. A. Teixeira Gueiros, Vice-President of the State, and President of the Legislative Assembly."

Mr. Morris goes on to describe his journeys to S. Luiz, the " Athens of Brazil " ; to the town of Therezina, capital of the inland state of Piaui ; to the port of Fortaleza (Ceara) on the north-east coast, and other places. In each case he met with the same eager reception and " throughout encountered enthusiastic co-operation for the work of the Society."

Brazil, with an area greater than that of the United States of America and a population of over 40 millions, shows a growing demand for the Scriptures : in 1949 over a million and a quarter copies were distributed, while 1950 promises to reach the two million mark.

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Mr. R. J. Davies, a colporteur working in Brazil, and supported by the National Bible Society of Scotland, has sent in a report of his activity there. The following extracts from it show the great opportunities open to Bible distribution in Brazil at the present time :

" We recently made a prolonged trip in the work of colportage to the district North-West of Angulo, some 200 miles from Londrina. The trip was made in the old Ford car and the colporteurs were the writer and our Japanese student-worker, Yoshio. En route to the Angulo region there is a

large Japanese colony and there Mr. Yoshio was able to do an excellent work and place many copies of the Word in the Japanese language in the homes of the colonists.

" Interesting contacts along the way were the coffee harvesters. These gatherers of ' brown gold ' would have purchased from us all the copies of the Bibles we had available for the trip. We reluctantly had to ration the sales of the whole Bible in order to save some for our journey's end. To these groups, sometimes they are whole families, 10 to 20 in number from children of five to the father and mother, we were able to explain as we read to them God's Way of Salvation from the Word of God. It is a great enjoyment to see the eager faces listening to the old, old story. The need of these people is great. During and for a short while after the coffee harvest they are well off, but the cost of living is so high and their moral standards are so low that the easy money they make during the coffee harvest soon is spent.

" At Angulo we made our base in the homes of the believers and spent the days working out in different directions, returning at night to one of the homes for a Gospel service or a Bible reading.

" In the Settlement itself we had some very interesting experiences. Scriptures were sold in Portuguese, German, Japanese and Italian. Some Brazilian Roman Catholics who never before had seen the so-called Protestant Bible, were eager purchasers of the Word. European emigrants, mostly Germans from the Russian zone of Germany, were glad to receive copies of the New Testament in their own tongue. After a full day of visiting the homes of the people we held our first open-air meeting in the Settlement, and we had a very good turnout at the close of which more Scriptures were sold.

" On any other day we would have had to go out to the plantation to meet most of the families, but it was another Saint's Day and so we found most of them at home. We were fortunate in getting at the men folk, because usually the women will not purchase without the consent of the husbands. One of the men we met on one of the farm lanes, going out to spend the day with some friends some distance away. When he knew we had Bibles to sell he returned with us to his home for the money to buy one. He then accompanied me to some of the other homes and on his recommendation other people bought either New Testaments or Bibles. In some of the houses they were preparing for a religious service which was to be held later in the day in honour of the saint. It was a great chance to tell them of Saint John and Saint Peter and of their valuable teaching for the present day and their words of warning for the future. In this way many bought Gospels, and not having the necessary money or change handy, eggs, pea-nuts and fruit became the medium of exchange."

Burma

The B.F.B.S. has just issued a first edition of the Gospel of St. Mark in Riang Lang (or Black Riang). This is the language of a remote tribe in Upper Burma who live in the Southern Shan States. Saya Kham Pang, a colporteur of the B.F.B.S. for 22 years (supported by the B.F.B.S. ' Stamp Corner ') and a member of the American Baptist Mission for over 40 years, has made this translation of St. Mark into his mother tongue. The first draft translation was made from the Shan New Testament with reference to the English Authorised Version. Professor Luce, a linguistic expert, has carefully checked the version with the Greek and entreated the Bible Society to publish

an edition. At present the tribe is wholly illiterate, but Saya Kham Pang hopes to do evangelistic work among his own people and " prays that readers may multiply."

Canada

Miss E. Gordon, Convener of the Committee for Religious Education Research of the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario, remitted to the General Secretary of the *B.F.B.S. in Canada* a cheque for over $4,000, expressing the wish of the contributors that it should be used by the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES to purchase Bibles for the school children of Berlin, or those areas where, in our opinion, copies of the Scriptures will be most useful. Miss Gordon went on to say :

" In this small way the Women Teachers of Ontario wish to share with the children of Germany something of our rich religious heritage, for which we are in part indebted to their forebears. The gift will be followed with earnest prayer that the Truth, which alone sets men free, shall, through the copies of God's Word which this fund provides, ' have free course ' in helping to lead the youth of Germany to Him Who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

Scriptures have now been ordered from the Evangelische Haupt-Bibelgesellschaft zu Berlin, and will be distributed soon.

China

Mr. L. S. Ling, a Christian who has worked in commerce until now but who has been keenly interested in Sunday School activities for 20 years, has recently been appointed Promotional Secretary of the *China Bible House.* Mr. Ling, who is the first person ever to hold this position, started his work by making a tour of some of the regional and district offices of the Society in China.

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The China Bible House is working on an illustrated Gospel of St. John, which is intended especially for new literates.

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The Rev. W. Stott of the Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society has just completed the initial translation of St. Mark's Gospel into the main dialect of the Tais, in the Society's south China field. These people have therefore been given a written script for the first time in their history, and this Gospel will be the first literature published in their language.

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Scriptures have been circulated among African troops of the Portuguese Army who have come from Angola to be stationed in the little Portuguese colony of Macao, just outside Hongkong, on the borders of China. A retired Baptist missionary has started work among these men and a correspondent has written to the B.F.B.S. about this work as follows :

" Mr. Galloway, the missionary in charge of this work, can speak Portuguese and these African boys love him. There has been an immediate response and he is hoping very shortly to baptise at least twenty converts. It seems very wonderful that God in His loving kindness has brought these African soldiers to the one place where they could hear the Gospel in Portuguese, a tongue which they all speak very well indeed. They are hungry for the Word and there is great rivalry amongst them for the possession of a precious

Bible in Portuguese. Mr. Galloway says that he thinks that the only course of action open to him when he gets back with these twenty copies will be to let them draw lots, otherwise he may be accused of favouritism."

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The following report has come to the China Bible House from Mr. W. S. C. Walker, a missionary at work in the Kiuchuan (Kansu) region :

" Last week-end I paid my first visit to the country since coming here. This was not because I had not wanted to go before, but hosts of things have cropped up which repeatedly wrecked plans which were again and again renewed. At last, however, Liu Ting-tu, the leading deacon, was free to take me. Lin Shui is a small town sixteen miles from here on the old Kintah motor road. The Misses French and Cable visited it several times when operating in this part of the world. From there one goes three more miles into the heart of nowhere to find six small homesteads parked in the centre of miles and miles of barren alkali-loaded country. At the moment the whole place is frozen solid, but in about another month's time everywhere will be oozing water and the whole will be one huge bog. Even the floors of the homes in this little settlement will ooze water as the folk move about from place to place. For a month or more this place is unapproachable, so we had to get this initial visit in before the thaw came. There, in this out-of-the-way corner, one found something to really cheer the heart of any Panhandle worker. One could almost call it the only bright spot in the district.

" Years ago the three ladies (C.I.M. missionaries) visiting Lin Shui sold a Gospel to a man named Yang. He could not read but took it home and put it by. Later his brother visited them and read the Gospel, became intensely interested and made several trips into Kiuchuan to hear more. Finally he became converted and went back to be used of the Lord to bring his brother and the brother's whole family to the Lord. Those two men are dead. The widow of the original buyer of the Gospel is still alive and, together with her two sons, their wives and six grandchildren, is still rejoicing in the Lord.

" Opposition was bitter at first, but gradually one after another of the surrounding homes have been won to the Lord ; and stretching out they have touched their neighbours on every side, with the result that now from all quarters men and women come, the nearest three miles away, to gather every Sunday for service. All are living on the brink of starvation, barely wrestling a living from the inhospitable Gobi desert ; yet this Yang family have put aside a room (20 by 20 feet), whitewashed it within and without, and suitably furnished it to serve as a chapel. And all this was a spontaneous movement of the Spirit, for I was the first missionary to reach that ground and visit their home. They reckon they have between forty and fifty men and women from the scattered homesteads who are real believers, and the Lord seems to have worked not merely in individuals but in whole families."

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In a letter of Dr. Mortensen, dated China Bible House, Shanghai, 21st August, there is the following information :

" We are going full steam ahead with our publishing programme and find no difficulty in purchasing India paper, Bible paper and newsprint (Chinese manufacture).

" We also have very encouraging news from Mr. Marthinson, Lanchow, where he has distributed 200 000 Gospel Portions in the last two or three months, and expects to distribute another 200,000 up to the end of September.

" A small independent Chinese church, west of Tihwa in Sinkiang, has sent in a contribution of JMP100,000. There are no missionaries in the whole of Sinkiang, but many small independent self-supporting and self-propagating churches. Scriptures are also being sent to all these places in Sinkiang in Chinese, Russian, Mongolian, Tibetan and Turki."

Czechoslovakia

500 evangelical laymen in Czechoslovakia, after finishing a course on the Bible and the Church, have asked for this instruction to be continued.

Denmark

The following report of the activity of the *Danish Bible Society* in 1949, has been circulated :

" In 1949 the Danish Bible Society circulated 128,072 copies of Holy Scripture, of which 14,041 were Bibles, 57,890 New Testaments and 56,141 Portions.

" Of the Portions, 55,000 Gospels of St. John represent a gift from the American Bible Society. We have distributed these copies to various Church organisations, mainly for the benefit of young persons and children. This shows an increase of 70,525 as compared to last year, and even if we deduct the 55,000 Gospels from the A.B.S., there remains an increase of 15,525 on our own part. 64,000 Scriptures—including those from America—were distributed free of cost, and the number of Scriptures sold at half their cost has been doubled.

" The Board of Directors of the Society remains unchanged. Having in 1948 obtained the official authorisation for the recent translation of the New Testament, we have published three different editions of the whole Bible and two editions of the New Testament, one of the latter being published in a second impression, and we hope to be able to publish two more editions of the whole Bible and three editions of the New Testament.

" Formerly we published commentaries on the Old and New Testaments, and as this work has now been resumed with all our strength we hope in the course of a few years to be in possession of commentaries of all the Books of the Bible.

" Each year's young theological students receive as a gift from the Society the New Testament in Greek and the Old Testament in Hebrew. Work on a new vocabulary of the New Testament is making excellent progress and this can also be said about a parallel edition of the synoptic Gospels and an edition of the Apocrypha, while work on the Pseudepigraphs may be started soon. In the autumn we hope to be able to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the Danish version of the Bible of King Christian III.

" The Danish National Bank has at last granted us permission to send to the Verband der Evangelischen Bibelgesellschaften in Deutschland the amount of 100,000 Danish Kroner, which we, in 1947, resolved to contribute towards the printing of German Bibles. A receipt signed by Pastor Bode has been duly received. 3,000 Kroner have again been granted for the purpose of producing Bibles for the Blind, and 3,000 Kroner have been sent to the Danish Pathan Mission at Mardan in Pakistan, for the printing in the Pushtu language

of the late Dean H. Ussing's Gospel harmony. The Christian Press Bureau has been granted 750 Kroner, and 110,000 plans for Bible reading have been distributed in 1949 by the clergy in Denmark.

"The following points may be mentioned from the 1949 accounts: Scriptures to the amount of 200,000 Kroner have been sold; collections in all the churches throughout the country on New Year's Day amounted to 95,800 Kroner. From the expenditure items we would point out: 120,000 Kroner for the reduction of the price of Scriptures below the cost price; paper 153,000 Kroner; printing 182,000 and book binding 150,000 Kroner. (One Kroner is about the same as an English shilling.)"

East Africa

The first edition (150,000 copies) of the Union Swahili New Testament was sold out before the printing was finished, and a second edition of 50,000 is now going through the Press.

The Church Missionary Society bookshop in Nairobi first ordered 1,000 copies, but on receiving an advanced copy it increased the order to 10,000 and then to 15,000 copies. The loss carried by the B.F.B.S. on this edition seems to be about £11,000 or 2s. 3d. per copy.

Egypt

In 1949, 60,000 volumes of Scripture, mainly in Arabic, were circulated by the Agency of the B.F.B.S. in Cairo. The Rev. Leonard Geary, the agent there, estimates that a quarter of a million Arabic Scriptures could easily be circulated each year in the Arabic-speaking countries. Last year 117,000 Arabic Scriptures were produced in Cairo, but most of them were not delivered until this year. Mr. Geary writes:

"I wish we had some machinery whereby we could record the number of Scriptures purchased by Muslims, for I am sure that the figure would be astoundingly high."

The first edition of the complete Bible in Turkish-Kashgar has just been issued in Cairo. It has been translated by missionaries of the Church of Sweden Mission, Kashgar, whose members were expelled from Turkestan in 1938 as a result of the anti-God campaign. Kashgar Turki is generally understood throughout the whole country, and the missionaries, who based their translation on the Hebrew and Greek texts, were helped in their work by two natives. The first publication of the New Testament was in 1914, a revised edition being published in 1939.

England

A big event, called the "Festival of Britain," the aim of which is to show to British people as well as to foreigners what has been achieved by the way of life in Great Britain, is going to take place next year. Its centre will be in London, where a great exhibition is in preparation, but in addition local exhibitions and various other festivals will take place all over the country.

In connection with this Festival, a strong united Committee has been formed called " The Festival of Britain Churches' Advisory Committee," of which the Dean of Westminster is the Chairman and the Rev. L. W. Harland the Secretary.

Its work is to co-ordinate all the religious activities that are being organised in connection with the Festival. This Committee has asked the *British and Foreign Bible Society* to take the lead in organising a Bible Exhibition, which will show the contributions made by the Bible and the churches to our national life at home and overseas. Various interested bodies are co-operating with the Bible Society and planning to hold an Exhibition of a high standard in the Crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral (by kind permission of the Dean and Chapter) throughout the months of the Festival.

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The B.F.B.S. has opened new depots at Amman in Hashemite Jordan and at Saigon in Indo-China.

*

The Visual Aid Department of the B.F.B.S. reports that during the twelve months from 1st April, 1949 to 31st March, 1950, their two Mobile Film Units gave 304 adult showings to 20,000 people and 161 children's showings to 21,000 children.

They have on the stocks a 3-reel sound film of China which should be ready by the end of the year. It seeks to portray the influence of the Bible upon Chinese life since Morrison made his translation over 100 years ago.

In response to the growing demand for film strips they have produced nine in colour in the current year. They are : " How the Bible came to us," " Bibles that made History," " Arabs, Slaves and Bibles," " With the Cross in Dark Dahomey," " The Women of Burma," " Burma Calling," " The Bible on the Amazon and in Brazil," " Mary Jones and her Bible," " Seedtime and Harvest."

Ethiopia

Two new books of the tentative edition of the revised Amharic Bible—Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon—were published in August at the Royal Printing Press in Addis Ababa.

This revision is being made at the command of the Emperor Haile Selassie, by a committee of scholars and missionaries known as the Emperor's Amharic Revision Committee. This Committee was appointed in part by the Emperor and in part by the B.F.B.S.

At present there are two versions of the Bible in Amharic : the so-called Emperor's version, in more classical and stylish Amharic, which was ordered and published by the Emperor, and the version published by the B.F.B.S. which is more accurate but lacks the style of the other Bible. The translation under way will co-ordinate and revise these two versions.

The revision of the New Testament will be ready some time next year, but the Old Testament will take longer.

France

The Bible van of the *Alliance Biblique Française* started touring the country at four o'clock in the morning on 25th July. It had been delivered to the secretary, M. Blumenthal, at 10.30 p.m. the previous day! Pastors of the Reformed Church are giving in turn a month of their time to accompany the young evangelist who is driving the van this summer.

Germany

8,000 German Pocket Bibles have been sent from Western Germany to the German Bible Societies in the East, at the expense of the *Verband der Evangelischen Bibelgesellschaften in Deutschland.*

In addition, 380 Hebrew Kittel Bibles and 900 Nestlé Greek New Testaments have been despatched to the East for theological students.

The *Privilegierte Württembergische Bibelanstalt* has despatched 5,000 Chaga New Testaments to East Africa. These Scriptures represent a gift from the *Sächsische Haupt-Bibelgesellschaft* made in 1939 on the occasion of its 125th anniversary. The war had hindered the delivery of these books, and the first consignment of 5,000 was made in 1946.

*

For the first time since the end of the war the P.W.B. has sent Scriptures to the Bible Society in Strasbourg for use in the churches in Alsace.

*

From 1st October, 1949, to 30th September, 1950, the P.W.B. issued (Scriptures printed but not yet bound are not included in the following figures) : 232,000 Bibles ; 12,000 Expurgated Bibles for religious instruction in schools ; 185,000 New Testaments ; 10,000 Kittel Hebrew Bibles ; 10,000 Kittel Hebrew Portions ; 3,000 Rahlfs Septuaginta ; 5,000 Portions and selected passages ; 46,000 Special editions (Bible dictionaries, synopses, concordances, books of Scripture illustrations) ; 275 Scriptures for the blind.

*

The authorities of the Eastern Zone have forbidden the sale of any books or publications printed in the West. This interdiction also applies to Scriptures.

*

During the last four years 12,000 Scripture teachers have been prepared for religious instruction in the Eastern Zone. Dr. Zimmermann, Chairman of the *Altenburg Bible Society* and Chairman of the committee responsible for the training of the teachers, reported at the meeting of the German Bible Societies that a number of these Scripture teachers will also be asked to give time for colportage work.

*

An important stock of Bible paper put at the disposal of the *Evangelische Haupt-Bibelgesellschaft zu Berlin* has been confiscated in Leipzig by the Eastern German authorities, on the contention that a Roman Catholic religious tract of a political character had been printed on similar paper. Other stocks of Bible paper to be used by the Altenburg Bible Society have been blocked but not confiscated.

*

A church men's group in Dresden has laid down the following among the principles governing its activities :

" We regard it as our duty to attend the meetings of the men's group, the Bible classes and the lecture evenings. We regard ourselves as under obligation to read daily, at any rate, the Moravian maxims and the section for the day of the current Bible anthology. Ten to fifteen men of our group are undertaking to invite ten men each from their own neighbourhood to come to the meetings."

Hungary

The following extract is taken from a letter sent to Geneva recently by a Hungarian pastor :

" You can hardly imagine how many of our church people have become interested in the fundamental meaning of the Word in recent years, and they keep asking us for Biblical expositions to their everyday problems. I wish you could be in a position to see this.

" We had not imagined that such an immense interest in the Word could exist among the common people. There is a real hunger and thirst for spiritual truths among them."

Japan

There are approximately 100 Bible colporteurs at work in Japan. Each man has been supplied with a bicycle and lantern slide equipment, which were given by the American Bible Society. Every effort is being made to intensify colportage.

*

There are about one million Koreans in Japan and their number is steadily increasing with the influx of refugees into that country. Many of the missionaries who were formerly at work in Korea, are now active among Koreans in Japan. Most of them are getting into contact with the Bible House and Mr. Miyakoda, General Secretary of the *Japan Bible Society* writes in this respect :

" The first concern of the missionaries who work among Koreans in Japan is for the Bible, and fortunately we still hold some Korean Bible stocks which we received from London, so we are able to supply them. We are also printing 20,000 Korean Gospels. The missionaries' second concern is for Japanese Scriptures. Some Korean missionaries are now distributing Japanese Scriptures among Koreans—something Korean pastors have not done since the end of the war."

*

Later news received from the Japan Bible Society indicates that the Society has printed 40,000 Korean Gospels of John and 20,000 Gospels of Mark.

The British and Foreign Bible Society is preparing in Japan new editions of 20,000 Korean Bibles and 10,000 New Testaments.

Korea

The following extracts from a report sent to the B.F.B.S. by its representative from Korea (now in Japan), Mr. J. C. F. Robertson, give a vivid picture of the spirit of co-operation which exists between the Korean churches and the *Korean Bible Society* :

" During the early months of 1950, the Secretaries of the Korean Bible Society held conferences with the missionaries in Pusan, the great port at the southern tip of the Korean Peninsular. As a result, it was decided to carry out a special campaign. The Rev. Bruce Hunt visited us in Seoul and placed before us his plan of offering a copy of the Gospel according to St. John to every home in his city of Pusan. His students, who had been studying the Gospel in Bible classes, would help with the distribution.

" Friends in America contributed a sum of money sufficient to pay one half the cost; the Korean Bible Society underwrote the other half and began to accumulate enough paper to print an edition of 100,000 copies.

" The Gospels were in the hands of the printers by the end of February and were ready for Mr. Hunt by the end of April. By the end of May the distribution had been completed.

" Thirty-two churches in the city participated in the work of distribution and, according to reports which are not yet complete, 52,162 copies of the Gospel of St. John were individually placed in the homes of the city of Pusan by 1,141 people. A total of 3,031 names and addresses of people who expressed their desire to be Christians, was received."

In a letter from the Rev. Bruce Hunt, we find this complementary information about the follow-up of the special distribution campaign :

" Following the distribution of the Gospels we had special meetings for three evenings in 26 churches out of the 32 simultaneously. Then we had two nights on which special meetings were held in three of the largest school auditoriums. It was estimated that 3,000 were gathered in Pusan during these two nights to hear the Gospel. Finally we held a rally on Sunday afternoon, at which about 4,000 people attended. The largest auditorium in Pusan was filled and they had to ' rise and go forward ' three times to squeeze in the crowd.

" We have a few thousand of the Gospels left, which we hope to use in a similar way in a campaign in Masam this summer, and more would be a great help."

*

The Bible House in Seoul was completely destroyed as a result of military action in the city, and all the stocks have been lost, with the exception of a manuscript of the Bible in the new Hankul characters. News has been received that the Rev. Young Bin Im, General Secretary of the Korean Bible Society, is safe.

Netherlands

The *Netherlands Bible Society* has edited a film strip of 43 reproductions of etchings and pictures by Rembrandt, illustrating the Bible.

Another film strip, reproducing the " parables " of Eugène Burnand (a Swiss painter of the beginning of this century) is also in preparation.

Norway

The Rt. Rev. Bishop E. Berggrav, President of the UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES and one of the six Presidents of the World Council of Churches, has been conferred with an honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity by the theological faculty of the University of Marburg (Germany).

Pakistan

The Secretary of the Bible Society in Lahore, who has recently been appointed Assistant Bishop of Lahore, has sent some news about Bible Society work in his area. We give below some extracts from one of his letters :

" The translation of the Old Testament in Sindhi (my mother tongue), which I undertook two and a half years ago, has gone on bit by bit. To-day there still remain to be translated the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs and Zechariah. It will require much perseverance, prayer and fasting to complete the translation by the spring of next year. Will you please take your share in praying for its completion ? There will be many problems of printing, proof reading and publishing afterwards. I have not many helpers at present, but I have the assurance of God's presence and guidance.

" When the Urdu Bible was printing, friends of the Society ' bought ' a chapter which was their favourite for Rs.10 or £1, and others ' bought ' their favourite verses for annas 8, or 1/-. It will be wonderful to have the Sindhi Bible also paid for like that. I can then write by hand that chapter or the verse in Sindi script and send it to you.

" The translation of the Old Testament in Gurmukhi has been progressing most satisfactorily under the able guidance of Dr. C. H. Loehlin and the Rev. Sunder Singh. We are publishing a tentative edition of Genesis to let the general public test the language. The printing is well in progress. The translation has been done in consultation with many ' granthis ' and other experts in Gurmukhi. Criticisms and suggestions will be very welcome by the translators.

" The revision of the New Testament in Persian Punjabi is also in progress under the leadership of Dr. Harris J. Stewart. Once again the First Epistle of Peter, which is the book chosen for Bible study this year during the forthcoming Sialkot Convention, is being published as a tentative edition to test the acceptability of the language. You are invited to buy a copy for one anna and to send criticisms and suggestions.

" Our sales of Scriptures in the first six months of this year have already exceeded the entire sales of last year (35,400 books).

" Lately I have had the privilege of visiting many schools and colleges, and they have brought their own peculiar joys to me. In one village school where a number of children sat on the floor in an open courtyard, while I told them about our work, they expressed a desire to give something from their pocket money to the Bible Society. These children usually have one anna (a penny) per week for their pocket money. They collected Rs. 12-12-0. I was told that almost the whole amount was collected in pices (copper quarter anna). A girl in another village school sent her pocket money for four months. A school teacher sent all her savings ' for the Book I love most.' From another school the children have sent a week's pocket money. I praise God for this response from the children for it shows a real love for His Word.

" So many of you have kindly written and asked about the date of my consecration that I must refer to this matter again. When the Bishop of Lahore asked me in last March if I would agree to be his assistant, with charge of Sind and Baluchistan, I felt this was a call from God to return to my own people in Sind and carry on the ministry of preaching the Gospel to the Sindhis. The Bishop thought that the consecration might be at the end of this year ;

but it has also been an equally clear guidance that I should first complete the translation of the Old Testament in Sindhi before I take on the new responsibility as Assistant Bishop. My wife is one with me in this matter, and Bishop Woolmer also now agrees that this is the right decision. So the urgency for the completion of the translation in Sindhi has become even greater.

"But, however heavy the work may be, if it is not ultimating in the conversion of the unsaved, I feel that we would be missing the mark of our high calling. In the last three months I have had the joy and privilege of preparing four young Muslims for baptism. Our colporteur in Karachi, Mr. Joseph Memon, has prepared three more. All these men have received instruction in the Bible House. My heart is full of praise to God Who has called these men into the fellowship of His Son."

Philippines

The *American Bible Society* agency in Manila is celebrating its 50th anniversary. A.B.S. work there was started shortly after the islands were occupied by the U.S.A. The B.F.B.S. at the same time had set up an agency for the Philippines (and Indo-China), but in 1918 agreement was reached between the two Societies whereby the B.F.B.S. became responsible for all the work in Korea and the A.B.S. for all activities in the Philippines.

The first Portion to be published in any of the vernaculars of the Philippines was a Gospel of Luke in Pangasinan, issued by the B.F.B.S. in 1887. Up till the present time the complete Bible has been produced in eight languages and single Gospels are available in eight new languages. In most of the translation work the missionaries had first to reduce the languages to written form.

During these fifty years of activity, 4,409,182 volumes have been circulated in the Philippines by the Bible Society there.

*

Daily Vacation Bible Schools in the Philippines are found to be very effective for getting children together for Bible study during the vacation months of April and May. The following are pertinent facts gathered from reports, and published by the World Council of Christian Education in their quarterly magazine :

1. Usually, classes are held for a month for morning session only, or two weeks for double sessions.

2. Ninety per cent. of the 1,069 teachers are volunteer workers.

3. A number of the classes are held in localities where there are no churches and the Christian message has not been given before.

4. In many instances, parents flock to see the classes, and oftentimes the teachers find themselves conducting adult Bible classes or preaching Evangelistic sermons in addition to their work with the children.

5. About half of the 24,476 children come from non-Protestant homes.

6. The increase in the enrolment this year over that of the preceding year was 1,796.

7. Every year 3,000 children make decisions for Christ.

8. The emphasis in 1949 was for the teachers to visit the homes and start family worship. This year 1,336 families promised to observe daily devotions.

9. In one instance, a Daily Vacation Bible School class of small children served as a nucleus for a Kindergarten school, meeting daily for the year.

10. Besides contributing for their own Vacation School supplies, travel of teachers, and other needs, the children gladly made offerings for the Bible Society, Bible schools, hospitals, leprosarium, etc., to a total of 694.12 pesos this year.

Scotland

In addition to orders in kind for a total of 150,000 copies of the Nyanja Bible, the *National Bible Society of Scotland* (which is printing these Bibles on behalf of the B.F.B.S.) has also received orders for 100,000 copies for Nyasaland.

United States of America

The *American Bible Society* has been on the air every Friday and Tuesday during the summer, in two series of radio programmes of the American Broadcasting Company. In one series, Dr. F. Stifler (Secretary for Public Relations) gave talks of ten minutes each under the general title of " Gems for Thought About the Bible." The other series was devoted to interviews with well-known people in American life about their favourite passage of Scripture. The testimonies were given by persons of all walks of life, and it is intended that the second series will be continued until the end of the year.

*

Korean Scriptures for members of the South Korean armed forces have been shipped from New York at the request of the Korean Bible Society.

The American Bible Society has printed a special edition of 50,000 books in Korean containing the Four Gospels and Acts, and 100,000 copies of the Sermon on the Mount in Korean and English are also going to be sent out from the United States.

*

The Board of Managers of the American Bible Society has authorised the publication of an illustrated edition of the Book of the Acts, similar to the illustrated Gospel of St. Luke already published.

*

Two diglot editions in Spanish are to be published by the A.B.S., the one being 2,500 copies of the Gospel of Mark translated into San Blas, the other 1,000 copies of the Gospel of Mark in Piro.

Yugoslavia

On the occasion of the visit of Lutheran church leaders to Yugoslavia recently, Patriarch Vinkentij of the Serbian Orthodox church reiterated his request for a gift of 10,000 Serbian Bibles for the Orthodox church in Yugoslavia. 10,000 Serbian Bibles and 50,000 Serbian New Testaments being printed for the British and Foreign Bible Society are just coming off the press.

Roman Catholicism and the Bible

Czechoslovakia. A visitor who has recently returned from Czechoslovakia reports the following :—

"A new service is being introduced into Roman Catholic churches, often held in the middle of the week. After a few prayers the priest goes into the pulpit, reads a passage from the Bible and then expounds it to his people. This is something quite new, and often the priests exhort their people to obtain and read the Bible. Since the end of the war, I am informed that 400,000 copies of the New Testament, produced in Roman Catholic publishing houses, have been circulated with the blessing of that church."

Miscellaneous

It is estimated that there are still 60-80 million refugees wandering about the earth, seeking resettlement, and about one-fifth of them are in Europe.

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There are 800 million children in the world, and well-informed people working in the United Nations Social Commission, consider that more than half of them are suffering from under-nourishment.

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According to an announcement made during a broadcast from Leningrad, the Soviet Society for Political and Scientific Research is preparing a new campaign against Christianity. Anti-religious films have been sent to all Soviet republics and 29 million leaflets on the subject have been issued.

*

Sir Clutha Mackenzie, the U.N.E.S.C.O. Secretary for work amongst the blind (see *Bulletin* No. 3) has sent in the following information :

" You will be glad to hear that the Indian Government's Braille Committee in a two-day meeting decided unanimously to accept the International Braille Conference's recommendations. This brings unanimity to the recommendations. It marks a great step forward and in India, we hope, an end of a long and sometimes acrimonious debate of fifty years. India desires the new Braille to be in final form by the end of the year so that its new plant for printing at Dehra Dun in Northern India may begin work.

" We had a committee meeting in London in mid-July of the leading African linguists from the School of Oriental and African Studies and blind Braillists, to discuss a uniform system for African Tribal languages. A practical table was outlined and a report of the proceedings will be sent to you when it is ready."